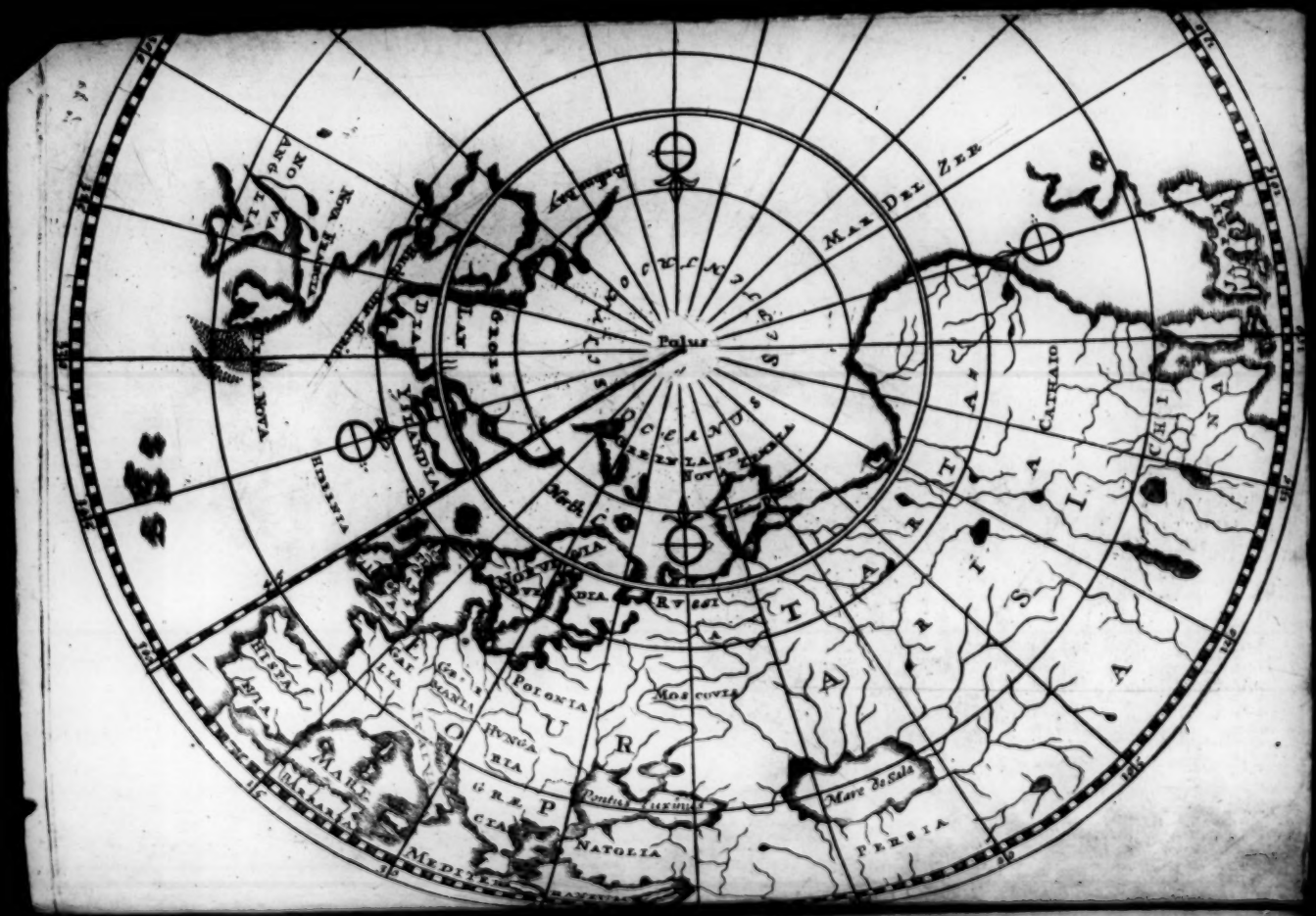
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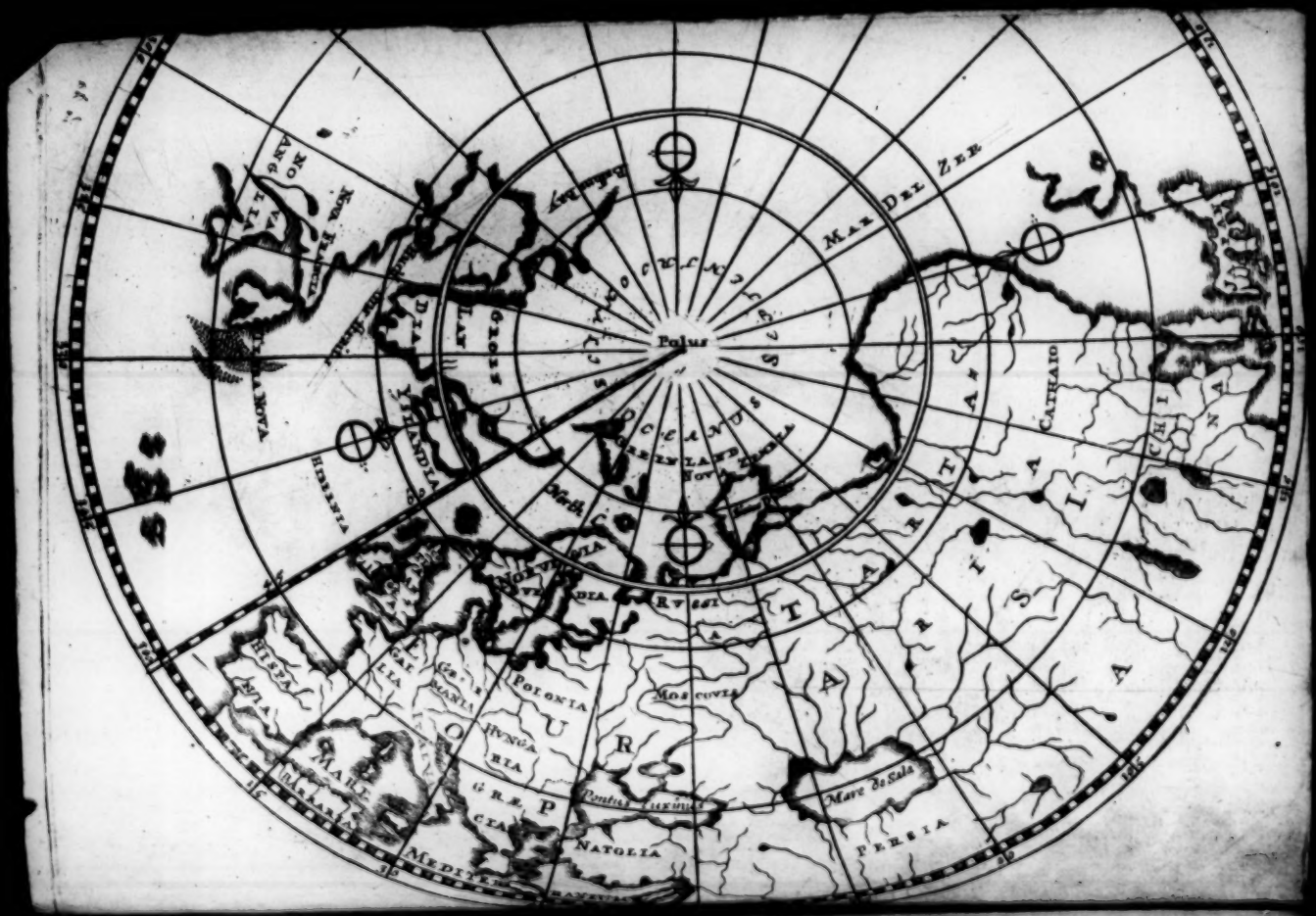
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A BRIEF

DISCOURSE

OF A

PASSAGE

BY THE

North-POLE

TO

JAPAN, CHINA, &c.

Pleaded by Three Experiments: And Answers to all Objections that can be urged against a Passage that way.

As
1. By a Navigation from *Amsterdam* into the *North-Pole*, and two Degrees beyond it.
2. By a Navigation from *Japan* towards the *North-Pole*.
3. By an Experiment made by the *Czar* of *Muscovy*, whereby it appears, that to the Northwards of *Nova Zembla* is a free and open Sea as far as *Japan*, *China*, &c.

With a MAP of all the Discovered Lands neerest to the *Pole*.

By *Joseph Moxon*, Member of the Royal Society, and Hydrographer to the King's most Excellent Majesty.

The Second Edition.

London, Printed by *J. Moxon*, and Sold at his Shop at the *Atlas* in *Warwick-Lane*, 1697.

A BRIEF

DISCOURSE

OF A

PASSAGE

BY THE

North-POLE

TO

JAPAN, CHINA, &c.

Proved by Three Experiments: And Answers to all Objections that can be urged against a Passage that way.

By a Navigation from Spain towards the North-Sea, by an Experiment made by the Czar of Muscovy, which it appears, that to the Northwards of Nova Zembla and open Sea as far as Japan, China, &c.

By Joseph Moxon, Member of the Royal Society, and Hydrographer to the King's most Excellent Majesty.

The Second Edition.

London, Printed by J. Moxon, and Sold at his Shop at the Sign of Atlas, in Russel-Lane, 1697.

A Brief Diſcourſe of a Paſſage by the North-Pole *to* Japan, China, *&c.*

AMong the many Eſſayes that have been made to find a neer Paſſage to *Japan*, *China*, &c. the moſt probable and likely hath as yet (in my Opinion) been over ſeen, or at leaſt not attemped; And therefore I ſhall hereby communicate my Conceptions to Publick approbation or cenſure. It is that a Paſſage may very probably be about the *North-Pole*; and the reaſon inducing me to conceive ſo, is, That we have no certainty from all the Diſcoveries that have been made of any Land lying within 8 degrees about the *Pole*; but on the contrary, that I have credibly been informed by a Steerman of a *Dutch Greenland* Ship, that there is a free and open Sea under the very *Pole*, and ſomewhat beyond it. And I for my own part give credit to his Relation, and do conceive that any ſober ingenious Man would do the like, did he know in what an honeſt manner, and by what an un-intereſſed accident I hapened to hear it; for thus it was, being about 22 Years ago in *Amſterdam*, I went into a Drinking Houſe to drink a cup of Beer for my Thirſt, and ſitting by the publick Fire, among ſeveral People, there happened a Sea-man to come in, who ſeeing a Friend of his there, who he knew went in the *Greenland* Voyage, wondred to ſee him, becauſe it was not yet time for the *Greeland* Fleet to come Home, and ask'd him what accident brought him home ſo ſoon; his Friend (who was the Steer-man aforeſaid, in a *Green-*

land Ship that Summer) told him that their ſhip went not out to Fiſh that Summer, but only to take in the Lading of the whole Fleet, to bring it to an early Market, &c. But, ſaid he, before the Fleet had caught Fiſh enough to lade us, we, by order of the *Greenland* Company, ſailed into the *North-Pole*, and came back again. Whereupon (his Relation being *Novel* to me) I entred into diſcourſe with him, and ſeem'd to queſtion the truth of what he ſaid. But he did enſure me it was true, and that the Ship was then in *Amſterdam*, and many of the Seamen belonging to her to juſtifie the truth of it; and told me moreover, that they ſailed 2 degrees beyound the *Pole*; I askt him, if they found no Land or Iſlands about the *Pole*? He told me No, there was a free and open Sea; I askt him if they did not meet with a great deal of Ice? He told me No, they ſaw no Ice; I askt him what Weather they had there? He told me fine warm Weather, ſuch as was at *Amſterdam* in the Summer time, and as hot. I ſhould have askt him more queſtions, but that he was ingaged in diſcourſe with his Friend, and I could not in modeſty interrupt them longer. But I believe the Steer-man ſpoke matter of Fact and Truth, for he ſeem'd a plain honeſt and unaffectatious Perſon, and one who could have no deſign upon me.

But though I believe this ſtory, yet methinks I hear many object againſt it, and are apt to urge three ſeeming Reaſons to prove it falſe, or at leaſt ſome particulars of his Relation. And firſt, That it cannot be warm under the *Pole*, becauſe that about *Greenland*, and many other parts leſs Northerly, the Sea is ſo full of great Bodies of Ice, that ſhips can hardly ſail for it. Secondly, Or if warm, yet not ſo warm as at *Amſterdam* in the Summer time, becauſe the farther Northerly, the colder Weather. Thirdly, Or if they were under *Pole*,

that

that they could not tell how to come back, but that they might as well go farther from, as return nearer to home, becauſe the *Needle* pointing always *North*, they muſt needs looſe themſelves in the *North-Pole*, where it muſt indifferently reſpect all points of the Horizon alike.

One Anſwer may ſerve to the firſt and ſecond Objection; That it cannot be warm under the *North-Pole*, &c. if we conſult the Experience of Travellers and Navigators, we are told that between the *Tropicks*, nay under *Equinoctial* is generally as moderate Weather as here in *England* in Summer time. Why may it not then be as warm under the *Pole*, as here or at *Amſterdam* in the Summer time; The ſmall height the Sun hath there can be no exception, for then we having the Sun in its Summer Solſtice in leſſer Altitude than between the Tropicks, it muſt needs be much colder here, which is contradicted. But one Reaſon why it is as warm here as between the Tropicks, is, becauſe between the Tropicks the Sun remains ſcarce above 12 hours of 24 above the Horizon to warm it, when as here it remains almoſt 17 hours of 24 above the Horizon, and therefore leaves a greater impreſſion of heat upon it; and the farther Northward we go, the longer it remains above the Horizon, and leſs under the Horizon every 24 hours, till we come within the Arctick Circle, where the Sun remains for half a year together, *viz.* all the Summer above the Horizon, and never ſets: And therefore tho' his beams are not ſo perpendicular, yet they muſt needs cauſe a great degree of heat upon the Horizon.

And if it be argued that it is ſo cold about *Greenland*, &c. and the Seas ſo full of Ice, that Ships can hardly ſail for it, yet cannot that Argument prove that it ſo about the *Pole*; becauſe the Ice is made about ſhoars of Land, but never in open Sea, and comes there only by ſtrength of Currents, or high Winds, which does indeed

carry

carry it ſome ſmall diſtance from the ſhoar. But as this Relator ſaid there is under the *Pole* a free and open Sea, *&c.* and conſequently void of Ice, in Summer time at leaſt. Beſides, experience tell us, that all Land-briezes are colder than thoſe that come from Sea, and therefore it may be cold about *Greenland*, becauſe of the Land, and yet warm under the *Pole*, where the Sea is open, *&c.*

The third Objection is, that if they were under the *Pole*, they could not tell how to come back, becauſe of the indifferency the *Needle* ſhould bear to every point of the *Horizon*.

I examined not my Relator upon this Argument, tho' when I was parted from him, I was ſorry I did not. But it is eaſie to apprehend how to guide a Ship, either forward or backward by an Obſervation of the Sun, a little before you enter the *Pole*; for by finding in or near what Meridian it is, or upon what part of the Ship it bears, whether on Head or Stern, on Starboard or Larboard, you may meaſure Time near enough with a Glaſs, to know ſeveral daies after in or near what Meridian the Sun is at any known or eſtimate time, and conſequently know how to proceed forwards, or come back with your Ship; or if the Moon have *North* Latitude, you may do the ſame by the Moon. But if the *Pole* were Traded, in ſhort time it might be found by Variation of the *Needle*, for there is doubtleſs Variation in it, and in all the Meridians about it, ſeveral Variations.

Thus far it appears there is a free and open Sea in Summer time (at leaſt) about the *North-Pole*. But I ſhall add another Relation of one *James Ben*, whoſe Father lived about five Years ago in Crown-Court in *Ruſſel-ſtreet* in *Covent Garden*, and himſelf lives now in *Wapping*. This Mr. *Ben* ſailed to *Japan* with the *Dutch*, as a Carpenter of the Ship, and he told me that that Year, *viz.* 1668. he was newly come home from *Japan*; I askt him

him how long they were under-way home from thence? He told me, he could not well tell, becauſe when they ſet out from *Japan*, the Captain commanded the Steerman to ſail due *North*, and they did ſail from thence about 400 *Dutch* Miles, which is almoſt 27 degrees due *North*. I askt him whether they met with no Land or Iſlands, as I had done before the *Dutch Greenland* Steerman? He told me No, they ſaw no Land, but that there was a free and open Sea ſo far as they ſailed, nor any ſign of Land appeared. I askt him why they ſailed ſo far *Northward*? He told me he could not tell, only the Captain commanded it, *&c.* But I ſuppoſe the *Eaſt-India* Company commanded the Captain either to make a Diſcovery of Land to encreaſe Trade, or to ſatisfie themſelves with the knowledge of an open Sea, that when they ſaw Reaſon, they might expedite their Voyages between *Holland* and thoſe parts that way. I was thus Inquiſite with him, becauſe ever ſince I heard the former Relation of the *Greenland* Steer-man, I harped at a Paſſage through or about the *North Pole* to *Japan*, *China*, &c. and by theſe two Diſcoveries, it appears very probable that there is ſo, and that it is paſſable in Summmer time.

I come to a third Relation, not only of the probability, but of the certainty of a Paſſage found by the *Ruſſians* this laſt Year, as it came to the hands of the Secretary of the *Royal Society* from *Amſterdam*, by a Correſpondent of his; which in *Tranſact.* Numb. 101. run in theſe words:

A Letter, and Map, not long ſince ſent to the Publiſher, by an Experienced Perſon reſiding at Amſterdam, *containing a true Deſcription of* Nova Zembla, *together with an intimation of the advantage of its ſhape and poſition.*

SIR,

I Herewith ſend you what I have received out of *Muſcovy*, which is a New Map of *Nova Zembla* and *Weigats*, as it hath been diſcover'd by the expreſs order of the *Czar*, and drawn by a Painter, called *Panelapoetski*, who ſent it me from *Moſco* for a preſent, by which it appears: That *Nova Zembla* is not an Iſland, as hitherto it hath been been believed to be; and that the *Mare Glaciale* is not a Sea, but a *Sinus* or Bay, the Waters whereof are ſweet, which is the ſame with what the *Tartars* do alſo aſſure us, who have taſted thoſe Waters in the very midſt of the *Sinus*. The *Samojeds* as well as the *Tartars* do unanimouſly affirm, that paſſing on the back of *Nova Zembla*, at a conſiderable diſtance from the ſhoar. Navigators may well paſs as far as *Japan*. And 'tis a great fault in the *Engliſh* and *Dutch*, that ſeeing to get to *Japan* on the South ſide of *Nova Zembla*, they have almoſt always paſſed the *Weigats*. The letter *O* in the great River *Oby* marks the place of a Cataract or fall of Waters; the letter *K* denot the conjunction of *Zembla* with the Continent. The River marked *L*, runs towards *China*, called *Kitaie*: which is not every where Navigable, by reaſon of the Rocks and other inconveniencies that obſtruct the paſſing of Veſſels. *Weigats* it ſelf is very difficult to paſs, becauſe of the great quantity of Ice, continually falling into it out of the River *Obey*, whereby that ſtraight paſſage is ſtopp'd up. The *Samajeds* go every year a fiſhing upon the ſaid ſweet Sea and that on *Nova Zembla*'s ſide. This Map of *Nova Zembla* is here omitted, becauſe here is ſet forth a Map of all the Lands neareſt about the *North-Pole*.

FINIS.